

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NIAMEY 00906 291712Z

62

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 EB-11 AGR-20 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-03 COME-00 IGA-02 SWF-02 DODE-00

SS-20 NSC-07 TRSE-00 EUR-25 OMB-01 DRC-01 /142 W

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R 291223Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7430

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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ABIDJAN FOR EASUM, BUCHE AND REDSO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, NG

SUBJECT: NIGER SEEKS USG HELP FOR PEANUT SEED PURCHASES

REF: A. NIAMEY 878; B. NIAMEY 900

1. IN PAST TWO MONTHS THERE HAS BEEN NOTICEABLE, DEEPENING OF CONCERN BORDERING ON DESPONDENCY AMONG TOP OFFICIALS IN NIGER GOVERNMENT AS TO HOW TO COPE WITH EVER INCREASING EFFECTS OF DROUGHT. LARGE NUMBERS OF SEDENTARY FARMERS IN EASTERN NIGER ARE BEGINNING TO RUN OUT OF FOOD AND ARE ABANDONING ENTIRE VILLAGES TO SEEK REFUGE IN MARKESHIFT CAMPS ON EDGE OF CITIES. THE FEW NOMADS FROM THE SOUTHERN AREAS OF NIGER WHO UP TO NOW HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PRESERVE REMNANTS OF THEIR HERDS HAVE LOST REMAINING ANIMALS AND ARE FKLLY DEPENDENT ON RELIEF. REFUGEES CONTINUE TO COME IN FROM MALI. EXTERNAL FOOD SHIPMENTS ARE STILL FAR BEHIND SCHEDULE. OUTBREAKS OF DESEASE IN CAMPS ARE TAKING HIGHER TOLLS AS RESISTANCE DROPS BECAUSE OF PROLONGED MAINOURSIHMENT. REVENUES ARE DROPPING AND GON HAD TO HAVE SUBVENTION FROM FRENCH TO MEET EVEN OPERATING BUDGET. THIS YEAR'S PEANOT CROP WAS A DISASTER. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT NIGER OFFICIALS PONDER LATEST ADDITION TO

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PAGE 02 NIAMEY 00906 291712Z

GROWING LIST OF WOES, NAMELY UNEXPECTEDLY HIGH COSTS AND

TRANSPORT PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH NECESSITY PURCHASE PEANUT SEEDS IN SENEGAL (5,700 TONS) AND US (7,250 TONS) FOR TOTAL COST OF AROUND 11 MILLION DOLLARS.

2. APPEALS TO MAJOR DONORS HAVE THUS FAR ELICITED MINIMAL ASSISTANCE WITH EXCEPTION OF GERMANS WHO PROMISED 2 MILLION DM. OUR INITIAL REACTION TO REQUEST WAS NEGATIVE AND WE SO INDICATED TO GON. IN RECENT LETTER TO PRESIDENT DIORI ANNOUNCING LATEST SORGHUM TRANCHE WE CALLED ATTENTION TO OUR COOPERATION WITH SONARA IN PURCHASE OF SEEDS IN US, BUT SIDESTEPED ISSUE OF PROVIDING ANY FINANCIAL HELP.

3. NIGER GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, HAS AGAIN TURNED TO US FOR HELP. FIRST THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR RESPONSE TO NIAMEY 878 CONCERNING TECHNICAL AND TRANSPORT ASPECTS. BEYOND THOSE IMMEDIATE QUESTIONS, HOWEVER, THERE IS THE ABIDING PROBLEM OF HOW THE GON IS GOING TO PAY FOR THE PURCHASE OF THESEEDS IN THE US.

BECAUSE OF TIME CONSIDERATIONS THE DECISION WAS MADE TO BUY SEEDS ABROAD AND TO TRY TO WORK OUT THE FINANCES LATER. SINCE THE BULK OF THE PURCHASE WAS MADE IN THE US, THE GON IS HOPING THAT THE USG WILL HELP DEFRAID SOME OF THE ENORMOUS COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSACTION.

4. FONMIN BOUKARY SABO AND MINDEVELOPMENT BEMBELLM FIND GENERAL OUTLOOK SO DISTRESSING THAT THEY INSISTED SEE ASST SECY EASUM DURING ONE-HOUR STOP AT NIAMEY AIRPORT MARCH 28. NIAMEY 900 GIVES CERTAIN DETAILS DISCUSSION CONCERNING PEANUT SEED NEEDS. ADDITIONALLY THEY DWELLED UPON THE IRONY OF THE PEANUT CROP FAILURE AT THE NIGERIEN FAMILY LEVEL. AT LEAST 3/4 OF ALL AGRICULTURE FAMILIES IN NIGER ARE INVOLVED IN PEANUT PRODUCTION. HERETOFORE, THE FOOD CROP FAILURES, SUCH AS MILLET, HAVE CAUSED IMMEASURABLE SUFFERING, LEAVING ONLY THE PEANUT CROP TO BE CONVERTED TO MONEY TO SUSTAIN SOME SEMBLANCE OF FAMILY LIFE IN LIMITED AREAS. THE SHOCK OF THE LOSS OF THIS LAST MAINSTAY OF AMILY SUBSISTENCE IS OVERWHELMING AND PERHAPS IMMEDIATELY IMPOSSIBLE TO ASSESS. GIVEN THE EXTREME GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION AT THIS POINT, WE URGE THAT TUE USG URGENTLY EXPLORE MEANS TO FINANCE A MAJOR PART OF THE US LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 NIAMEY 00906 291712Z

PEANUT SEED PURCHASE.
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 29 MAR 1974
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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